

*Sub A01*

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An adaptive communication method for notifying an information notified person of information, which relates to the ability of any of a plurality of pieces of equipment, from a distributed system consisting of the plurality of pieces of equipment that is interconnected over a transmission medium and that includes one or more arithmetic units, said adaptive communication method comprising the steps of:
  - acquiring environment information, which indicates an environment in which the plurality of pieces of equipment is installed, at least a predetermined time earlier than the time instant at which the information is notified;
  - determining a way of notifying the information notified person of information according to the acquired environment information and the contents of information to be notified; and
  - notifying the information notified person of the information according to the determined way of information notification.
2. An adaptive communication method according to Claim 1, wherein the environment information is at least one of time information concerning the ability of equipment, equipment information concerning equipment connected over the transmission medium, location information concerning the information notified person,

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a level of attention at which the information notified person is attracted attention, an object of attention to which the information notified person is attracted attention, identification information with which the information notified person is identified, the contents or amount of information, information concerning an apparatus used to notify information, and ambient information concerning the plurality of pieces of equipment.

10           3. An adaptive communication method according to Claim 1, further comprising a step of suspending notification of the information notified person of information according to the environment information.

15           4. An adaptive communication method according to Claim 1, wherein at least one of changing a condition for notification of the information notified person of information according to the environment information, changing the contents of information, changing the apparatus used to notify information, changing a range of information notification, changing a priority given to information notification, changing the frequency of information notification, and splitting the contents of notified information is carried out in order to determine the way of information notification.

20           5. Equipment forming a distributed system that consists of a plurality of pieces of equipment being interconnected over a transmission medium and including

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one or more arithmetic units and that notifies predetermined information, comprising:

a means for acquiring environment information, which indicates an environment in which the plurality of pieces of equipment is installed, at least a predetermined time earlier than the time instant at which the information is notified; and

5 a means for determining a way of notifying an information notified person of information according to 10 the acquired environment information and the contents of information to be notified.

6. Equipment forming a distributed system according to Claim 5, wherein the environment information is at least one of time information 15 concerning the ability of equipment, equipment information concerning equipment connected over the transmission medium, location information concerning the information notified person, a level of attention at which the information notified person is attracted 20 attention, an object of attention to which the information notified person is attracted attention, identification information with which the information notified person is identified, the contents or amount of information, information concerning an apparatus 25 used to notify information, and ambient information concerning the plurality of pieces of equipment.

7. Equipment forming a distributed system according to Claim 5, further comprising a means for

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suspending notification of the information notified person of information according to the environment information.

8. Equipment forming a distributed system  
5 according to Claim 5, wherein the means for determining the way of information notification carries out at least one of changing a condition for notification of the information notified person of information according to the environment information, changing the  
10 contents of information, changing the apparatus used to notify information, changing a range of information notification, changing a priority given to information notification, changing the frequency of information notification, and splitting the contents of notified  
15 information.

9. A distributed system consisting of a plurality of pieces of equipment, which is interconnected over a transmission medium and includes one or more arithmetic units, and notifying  
20 predetermined information, wherein:

at least one of the plurality of pieces of equipment comprises:

a means for acquiring environment information, which indicates an environment in which the plurality of pieces of equipment is installed, at least a predetermined time earlier than the time instant at which the information is notified; and  
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a means for determining a way of notifying an

information notified person of information according to the acquired environment information and the contents of information to be notified.

10. A distributed system according to Claim 9,  
5 wherein the environment information is at least one of time information concerning the ability of equipment, equipment information concerning equipment connected over the transmission medium, location information concerning the information notified person, a level of  
10 attention at which the information notified person is attracted attention, an object of attention to which the information notified person is attracted attention, identification information with which the information notified person is identified, the contents or amount  
15 of information, information concerning an apparatus used to notify information, and ambient information concerning the plurality of pieces of equipment.

11. Equipment forming a distributed system that consists of a plurality of pieces of equipment  
20 being interconnected over a transmission medium and including one or more arithmetic units and that notifies predetermined information, comprising:

a memory in which programs are stored; and  
a processor, connected to the memory, for,  
25 based on the programs, acquiring environment information, which indicates an environment in which the plurality of pieces of equipment is installed, at least a predetermined time earlier than the time

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instant at which the information is notified, and determining a way of notifying an information notified person of information according to the acquired environment information and the contents of information to be notified.

5           12. Equipment forming a distributed system according to Claim 5, wherein the environment information is at least one of time information concerning the ability of equipment, equipment

10          information concerning equipment connected over the transmission medium, location information concerning the information notified person, a level of attention at which the information notified person is attracted attention, an object of attention to which the

15          information notified person is attracted attention, identification information with which the information notified person is identified, the contents or amount of information, information concerning an apparatus used to notify information, and ambient information

20          concerning the plurality of pieces of equipment.

13. Equipment forming a distributed system according to Claim 12, wherein said processor suspends notification of the information notified person of information according to the environment information.

25          14. Equipment forming a distributed system according to Claim 11, wherein said processor carries out at least one of changing a condition for notification of the information notified person of

information according to the environment information, changing the contents of information, changing the apparatus used to notify information, changing a range of information notification, changing a priority given 5 to information notification, changing the frequency of information notification, and splitting the contents of notified information.